



Aug. 18, 2006

# This Week In Correction

A weekly update of events in the Tennessee Department of Correction

## COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE:



While attending the Association of State Correctional Administrators meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina this week, Commissioner Little began to think back on the memorial service he had just attended at **BMCX** to mark the one-year anniversary of the death of Officer Wayne "Cotton" Morgan. During the service, Classification Coordinator Debbie Williams began telling of an event that stuck in the Commissioner's mind. The story goes...one day a skunk made its way into the Brushy Complex. The animal had gotten through the breezeway, into a garbage can and no one was willing to get anywhere near it. That was

until Cotton Morgan strolled along. Cotton walked over to the trash can and began talking to the skunk. No one knows for sure what he said, because no one would get close enough to find out.

But as Debbie tells it, there was something about the way Cotton spoke to the skunk that eased the situation, allowing Cotton to reach down, pick it up and carry it out without anyone being sprayed.

"I was touched by that story", said Commissioner Little. "It occurred to me that we should talk to inmates and other staff in a way that is going to yield good outcomes. It's really about how we go about doing the business of the department. If we do the right things for the right reasons in the right way, we'll get the right results. As I thought about the memorial, it went from looking back on Cotton's life to looking forward in the department and integrating treatment with re-entry. There is a lesson in the story of Cotton Morgan and the skunk that we should all learn from."



## REMEMBERING A FRIEND:



Ernestine Hicks, a long-time employee of the Tennessee Department of Correction passed away this week. She began her career in 1973 and remained in corrections except for a brief period at the Board of Probation and Parole. Mrs. Hicks was a Personnel Analyst 3 at **RMSI** until ill health forced her to retire in April.

Funeral Services were held this week in Goodlettsville.

At her request, TDOC Employees served as honorary pallbearers.

## A FRIEND IN NEED:

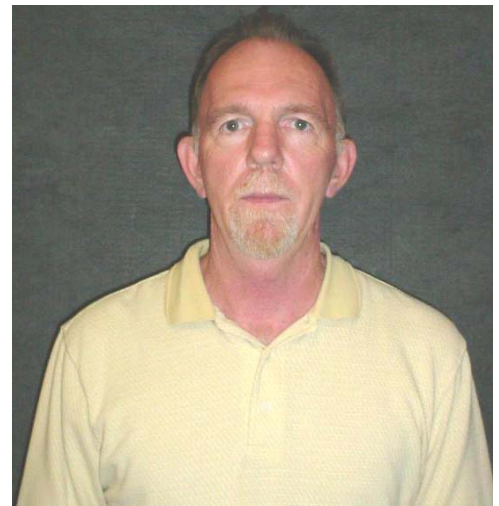
A "Special Replacement Blood Drive" was held this week for Amelia Brooks, wife of **MCCX** Counselor Jack Brooks (pictured right).

Mrs. Brooks has been diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and is currently undergoing extensive treatment at Vanderbilt Medical Center.

35 **MCCX** employees donated blood for Amelia.

Anyone interested in doing so can contact **MCCX**/Medic for more information. Amelia will begin another stem-cell replacement next week.

Jack Brooks, a 26-year veteran of TDOC, is staying in Nashville with his wife. If you would like to visit him, contact **MCCX**. Friends are asking for prayers for Amelia, Jack and their family.



## LET THE SEARCH BEGIN:

Emergency Services Coordinator Lolie Jones, Director of Special Projects Jim Dickman and Security Specialist Dan Strickland led a team of officers on a search through **TPW** for contraband. According to Lolie, "the search was a success, no drugs were found, the K-9 alerted on two areas,

the inmates were drug tested and at least one of them tested positive. I would like to thank **TCA**, and the excellent staff of female correctional employees sent from **CBCX, RMSI, DSNF, TPW** and **TRICOR**."



Officers conducted thorough searches through cells in several units, checking under mattresses and everywhere in between.

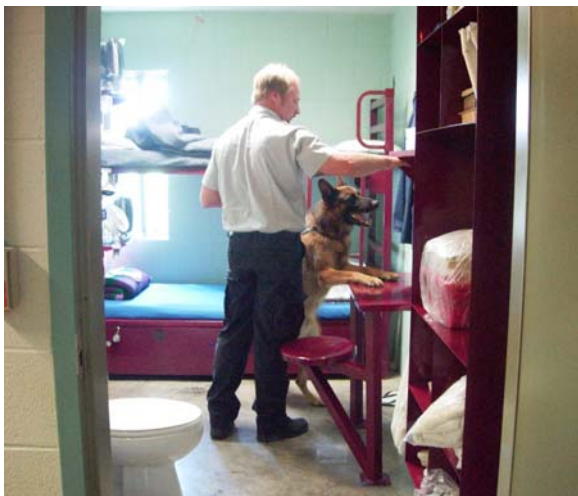




Inmates watch with interest as officers leave no stone unturned.



Cpl. Easton Lebo leads k-9 Nico on a sweep through the cells. Other dogs used during the search were Ellie, Sarge and Mick.



Graduating students from the Training Academy gain valuable experience by helping in the search. **(Above)**

## SHE'S THE WOMAN:



Congratulations to Judy Lambert, Judicial Cost Accountant, on her nomination as Treasurer of The Association of Women Executives in Corrections. Judy is a 33-year veteran of state government. AVEC members unanimously approved her nomination. The installation of officers is scheduled for the 2006 AVEC meeting in Phoenix. Deputy Commissioner Gayle Ray said, "Judy's position gives us national exposure. Judy is such a mainstay in so many of our associations, we appreciate that very much."

The Association of Women Executives in Corrections is dedicated to enhancing leadership opportunities for executive-level women in corrections and to promoting informed discussion of today's correctional issues. AVEC is also dedicated to building future correctional leadership capacity: its motto is 'EACH ONE TEACH ONE.'

## THE TAX MAN TAKETH:

H&R Block's gain is our loss. Turney Center Industrial Prison is bidding farewell to MIS employee Nelson Martinez who has accepted a position with the tax company. To celebrate, **TCIP** held a surprise luncheon for Mr. Martinez. For more than two years, he has been available around the clock making sure everything from the phone system to cameras, gates and computer software were up and running. Mr. Martinez always portrayed a positive attitude and was an asset to the Department of Correction.





## SERVICE AWARDS AT NWCX:

A service award reception was held at the Smyth Training Center at **NWCX**. 40 staff members received certificates and awards including Lt. Johnny Taylor, Alec Weeks-Maintenance and Myra Bickers-Food Service.



Warden Tommy Mills also attended the ACA 136<sup>th</sup> Congress of Correction in Charlotte, North Carolina this week. He was presented with the re-accreditation certificate by Robert Garvey, Chairperson of the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections.

## RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE:



When two inmates from the Morgan County Sheriff's Department made a daring escape, they didn't count on officers from **MCCX** joining in the hunt for them. Officer Larry Harris, Officer Mark Norman and Cpl. Jeff Hall and K-9 brought the escape to a screeching halt by quickly capturing the two fugitives. Sheriff Bobby Gibson has extended his sincere thanks and appreciation to the **MCCX** team as their search played a crucial role in the apprehension. Another job well done!

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE:

A documentary film crew based in New York joined Big Brothers/Big Sisters at **TPW** and **RMSI** this week to talk about the Amachi program.



The program matches volunteer mentors with children of incarcerated parents. The Amachi program also recently visited **MLCC**. It's estimated that more than 7.3 million children in the U.S. have one or more parent in jail or prison. Unless someone intervenes, 70% of those children are likely to follow their parent's paths.



Amachi is a West African word that means “who knows but what God has brought us through this child.”





## LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR:

The Department of Children Services and Woodland Hills Youth Development Center held an appreciation luncheon at **TPW** this week to say thanks to staff for providing food services to Woodland Hills during their recent kitchen renovation project. DCS officials said the lunch was a small token of thanks to **TPW** staff for going the extra mile to help provide a dependable and on time meal service.



Commissioner Little, Deputy Commissioner Ray and Assistant Commissioner Cathy Posey joined Warden Jewel Steele and Deputy Warden Debra Johnson for the lunch compliments of TDCS Deputy Commissioner Steve Hornsby, Executive Director Ken Steverson and Superintendent Albert Dawson and the Woodland Hills Food Services staff. In providing food service, Commissioner Little said, "That's what neighbors do."





## PROFILES IN CORRECTION: The Untold Story



### Sgt. Darrell Thomas, DSNF

The most defining moment of Sgt. Thomas' career played out more than 16 years ago at **TCIP**. It was a day that nearly ended his career but instead taught him what he was truly made of.

It started out like any other day, things had gone smoothly and Darrell Thomas was ready to head home for the evening. Then came the phone call. "That day I thought, what am I doing in this department, I could be flipping burgers for the \$800.00 a month I was getting," said Thomas. Word came that a riot had broken out at Turney Center Industrial Prison. "I almost quit that day, I was shaking, thinking I might have to take a life to save another employee's life. I never will forget it. We were well prepared and well trained, but it was crazy. I finally



realized that we have a job to protect the public. All these things may happen but if you go into it in a professional manner, you'll get respect and you can handle anything. We all had to depend on each other and communicate with each other. You just never know what an inmate is going to be thinking. My job now is to do what I got to do to get back in the parking lot at the end of the day."

**Sgt. Thomas hangs a framed photo in his office from a local newspaper of the Tactical Squad at TCIP.**

Coming from a family of educators including his parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, Sgt. Thomas could have continued the family tradition. Instead, he ended up in prison. Its like his father said, "You gotta have good people in bad places." Other members of his family include his wife, 16 year old son and a younger brother who is a Metro Nashville policeman.

Of his family, Sgt. Thomas says, "My son is smart, he studied hard. He's doing good. I sacrificed moving up in my career to be with my son and give him the time he needs. All of the peer pressure feels greater than what I am sometimes. I felt, as a parent, I need to put my career second to get him through. He think's I've never been 16 and I don't know what its like. I know one thing; he's not out of the woods yet, so I have to be there for him."



## QUOTES OF THE WEEK:

***"Experience is a hard teacher, because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward."***

-Vernon Law

-Submitted by Theresa Robinson, CC2, **NECX**.

***"Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see."***

-Submitted by Janice Brown, Administrative Secretary, Classification

***"The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today's work superbly well."***

-Sir William Osler

-Submitted by Patrick Ryan, Program Support Coordinator, Central Office

***"If you're going through hell, keep going."***

-Winston Churchill.

-Submitted by Mike Coker, Mental Health Coordinator, **TCIP**